

Marion Rauhut

A Helping Hand

He was on his way to the bus station. The streets were crowded, full of people who did not look after him. 'No, they will not miss me', Jason thought. 'Nobody will miss me'.

David, who persuaded him to the theft, had already forgot about him when Jason got into youth jail.

"It's easy", David said one afternoon six months ago. "We do not steel it, we rent it. Nobody will catch us. Thrust me." For his own matter he was right, nobody caught David. But they caught Jason. He would go into jail, six months separated from his family and his friends. "I hope it will be a doctrine to you", the judge told him.

And it was. He promised himself not to do something like that again, something that could bring him in jail. But he was not so sure about this promise any longer. 'Why keeping a promise if nobody thought I would be able to do so?' he thought to himself. Obviously they did not trust him, for he had to do social work when he got out of jail. 'But why?' he had no idea. 'Putting me in jail was penalty enough, wasn't it?' He saw no reason to look after old people, help them to go shopping or go for a walk with their dogs. That is why he played hooky yesterday. And now he had to live with the consequences.

"Play hooky one more time and you will go back to jail" his probation officer told him. His parents were angry, too. "Go on like that and you will destroy your whole life." His father predicted. "Can't you see what's the best for you? You are sixteen now, you should know how to manage at least a little part of your life."

Jason recalled this words to his mind when he stopped at the street. The traffic lights were red. Like a warning signal. "Do not pass the street!" it says, Jason thought. 'Yes, maybe I should not pass this street, go back home, make my social work.' But still, he saw no sense in helping old people. Don't they have children helping them?

Suddenly he realized the old woman standing next to him. She wore old clothes, a dark green skirt and an old raincoat with little holes in it. The three shopping bags she carried in her hands seemed to be rather heavy. Jason could not withstand the pressure to help her. It came surprisingly to him. He looked down to her, for he was much taller. Smiling, she looked back, a merry face she had.

"Do you mind helping me over the street?"

"Huh? Ah, well, yes. I mean, it's no problem. You give me your shopping bags?" He offered her his hands and took the bags. Together, they crossed the street. One part of

Jason's mind asked him what the hell he was doing there, but another one was quite happy. To Jason's surprise it was the bigger one. It felt good - helping this old woman, being needful, making someone else happy. He had never felt like this before. Therefore he went on carrying her bags, till they reached her home.

They talked a lot while their twenty minutes lasting march, or rather the old woman talked. Jason found out that she had not seen her children and grand children for years and that she was a very lonely person. 'But she manages her life, although it is difficult and has not always expired as she wanted it' Jason thought. On the one hand he felt pity for her, but on the other he admired her for her way of going through her life.

When they reached her home, she bid him farewell. "You are a kind person. Thank you a lot. I wish there were more people like you. Goodbye." Jason was astonished. And proud. Proud of himself. Maybe helping old people was not that bad at all? He went back, crossing the street one more time where he met the old woman. He knew he was doing the right thing, going back to a place he never really wanted to left. (And this would not be the last time for him to cross this street, for it was not the last time he helped the old woman. Many visits made them good friends.)